

COMMITTEE ON INFRASTRUCTURE & PUBLIC LANDS

**As a Committee of the Whole
WOBURN CITY HALL
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBER
APRIL 26, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.**

Voting Members present: Chairman Richard Gately, Alderman Robert Ferullo, Alderman Joanne Campbell, Alderman Darlene Mercer-Bruen, Alderman Jeffrey Dillon, Alderman Michael Concannon, Alderman Michael Lannan, Alderman Joseph Demers, and President Edward Tedesco

Also present: City Engineer John Corey

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VOTED to dispense with the reading of the minutes from the meeting of November 23, 2020, and to approve, all in favor, 9-0.

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Order to lay out Hill Street as a public way: Representing Montvale Land LLC were Attorney Joseph R. Tarby III, Murtha Cullina, Rubin & Rudman LLC, Suite 7, Woburn, MA; George Ryan, Stantec Planning and Landscape Architecture P.C., 226 Causeway Street, Boston, MA; and Chad Reynolds, Leggat McCall Properties, 10 Post Office Square, Boston, MA. Attorney Tarby said the Planning Board issued a report on October 27, 2020, that expressed no objections or concerns. He said at the previous meeting on November 23, 2020, the committee voted to request City Engineer Corey to attend the subsequent committee meeting. He said the widening of Hill Street is part of an agreement between Montvale Land LLC and the city. He said it makes sense for Mr. Ryan to take the committee through the plan and identify updates. Alderman Mercer-Bruen said it has been a while since the committee has seen the Planning Board's memo from October 27, 2020. Attorney Tarby furnished Alderman Mercer-Bruen with a copy of the Planning Board's memo. Mr. Ryan initiated a visual presentation. He said Hill Street runs in a north-south direction. He said they are proposing to widen Hill Street to four lanes; two in each direction. He said an egress from McDonald's will be added behind the restaurant. He said there will be a 6-foot median from the McDonald's egress to the Montvale Land project. He said there will be improvements to the park-and-ride lot. He said the new layout will be much more organized than the present layout. He said they have not made any notable changes to the plan since the last committee meeting. He said they have implemented a few changes and clarified some boundaries based on comments from city officials. Alderman Mercer-Bruen said the Planning Board memo identifies two conflicting layouts. She asked if that has been rectified. Mr. Ryan said that issue has been rectified. Alderman Mercer-Bruen said there was a discussion in October about the bicycle path and if anything is proposed for that area to allow cyclists to safely cross Hill Street. She said there was discussion about a warning signal activated by a button or something to that effect. Mr. Ryan said the developer has left a lot of space on either side of the

bike lane. He said the grade was raised to provide better visibility. He said there is no signal proposed. He said the installation of a pedestrian signal is usually based on traffic demand that will not be present at this location. Alderman Mercer-Bruen said she is very concerned about safety. She said she has gotten calls about the bike path in the area of Central and Grape streets and the area of Central and Albany streets. She said there is no mechanism to stop traffic to let bicyclists cross those streets. She said she does think there should be some kind of signal on Hill Street. She said the Traffic Commission will be looking at Albany Street. She asked if the committee could add a condition to any recommendation that there ought to be some sort of signal at the pedestrian crossing/bike path and Hill Street. Chairman Gately asked if Alderman Mercer-Bruen wants a signal that is activated by a button. Alderman Mercer-Bruen said there needs to be some kind of control there because Hill Street will be the main road in and out of the site. Chairman Gately said a signal could hold up traffic. Alderman Mercer-Bruen said there will be a lot of traffic coming from the site and people need to be able to cross the street safely. She said Winchester has a button-activated system for crosswalks. Chairman Gately said that may be something to think about. Mr. Reynolds said he does not necessarily disagree. He said as the demand for the site grows, there may be a need for a crossing mechanism in the future.

Alderman Mercer-Bruen said there will be a lot of construction vehicles traveling to the site during the construction phase. Mr. Reynolds said they see the potential for a crossing signal after the project is built. He said they would be willing to install a crossing signal with a beacon. He said their preference would be to build the road as planned and monitor traffic. He said he is not sure a crossing signal is needed on day one. Alderman Mercer-Bruen said she disagrees. She said she is not sure she is comfortable endorsing the project unless there is a traffic control mechanism operated by a button. She said she does not want to wait until she starts getting complaints. She said she is already getting calls now. She said perhaps the committee and the developer can come up with language upon which everyone can agree. Mr. Reynolds said he thinks the developer can come up with something. Alderman Mercer-Bruen asked Mr. Reynolds if he thinks Hill Street is going to be safe to cross with all the construction vehicles that will be coming and going. Mr. Reynolds said he thinks the developer is going to have to implement a construction management plan. He said they will put in a signal with a beacon sooner or later. Alderman Campbell said she agrees with Alderman Mercer-Bruen. She said she wonders why the developer is having trouble with the concept of installing a signal at the intersection of Hill Street and the bike path. She asked why the developer is resistant to installing a crossing light now. She said it does not make sense to her why they would wait. She said she does not think a signal light is much to ask. She said there will a lot of people living there and their safety is a priority. Attorney Tarby said there is no question there will be a signal there once the residential component of the project is completed. Mr. Reynolds said the developer will install the signal day one. He said the engineer did not believe it was needed. He said they will work to incorporate some kind of signal. Alderman Dillon said something needs to be done. He said there is quite a bit of activity there even now. He said he would rather see the signal installed on the developer's dime than the city's. Alderman Ferullo said if the developer puts in the signal now, it may not end up in the best place. He said he is in favor of signage but added the current conditions may change. Alderman Mercer-Bruen said there is a lot of activity there. She said she does not think it will be terribly difficult to move a signal a few feet one way or the other. City Engineer Corey said his office and the developer have had some back-and-forth discussions

about the elevation and the grade of the crossing. He said at some point there will be a need for a signal with a beacon. Alderman Mercer-Bruen asked if there is any harm in installing the signal now. City Engineer Corey said there is no harm whatsoever. He said he loves the Hill Street widening plan overall. He said Hill Street has been a design problem for the 21 years he has worked of the city. Alderman Mercer-Bruen asked if all the easements have been completed. City Engineer Corey said the developer took care of all the city's concerns. He said his office is satisfied. Attorney Tarby said his client understands the committee's concerns, based on the comments. He suggested that the developer could install a temporary device during the demolition and internal construction stage of the project, and when Hill Street is completed, something more permanent could be installed. Alderman Mercer-Bruen asked what type of temporary signage will be installed. Attorney Tarby said he is sure there are a number of things available. Alderman Mercer-Bruen said she does not think the committee is asking a lot. She said there is already a lot of activity there. She said she has a lot of concern about construction vehicles. She said she would like a signal. President Tedesco said he has no issue with the installation of temporary signage. He said that seems reasonable. He said he does not think there will be any need to install a temporary signal. He said the developer can install a signal at the end. Alderman Mercer-Bruen said she disagrees. She said now is the time to install a signal. Chairman Gately said he does not agree. City Engineer Corey said he is sure there is something temporary that can be used during construction. Chairman Gately suggested the installation of temporary flashing lights. He said he does not see anything wrong with that for now. He said the warning lights can be installed. City Engineer Corey asked Alderman Mercer-Bruen what type of crossing mechanism she has in mind. He said the flashing lights on Washington Street near Wendy's are rarely used. Alderman Lannan suggested a system with strobe lights. Alderman Mercer-Bruen said she prefers a signal with a mechanism that is activated by pushing a button. She asked when the widening of Hill Street is expected to be completed. She said she wants to make sure the signal is completed in concert with the first building. Mr. Reynolds said they want to get the road widening done in 12 months. Alderman Mercer-Bruen suggested a condition that requires the developer to install a temporary signal until such time the widening is complete or one of the developer's buildings open up. City Engineer Corey said the developer could place portable signals in a bucket with cement. Mr. Reynolds said the occupancy of the first building is a good marker for the permanent signal. Alderman Mercer-Bruen said she is happy with that. Motion made by Alderman Mercer-Bruen and seconded by Alderman Campbell that the following condition be added: That a temporary strobe pedestrian/bicycle crossing light shall be installed at the intersection of Hill Street and bicycle path during the construction phase of the project, and that a permanent pedestrian/bicycle crossing light shall be installed at the intersection of Hill Street and the pedestrian/bicycle path upon completion of construction or occupancy of the first building, whichever comes first; approved, 9-0. Motion made by President Tedesco and seconded by Alderman Mercer-Bruen that the order be sent "back for action" with the following condition: That a temporary strobe pedestrian/bicycle crossing light shall be installed at the intersection of Hill Street and the pedestrian/bicycle path during the construction phase of the project, and that a permanent pedestrian/bicycle crossing light shall be installed at the intersection of Hill Street and the pedestrian/bicycle path upon completion of construction or occupancy of the first building, whichever comes first; approved, 9-0.

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Motion made by President Tedesco and seconded by Alderman Mercer-Bruen to adjourn, 9-0.
Chairman Gately adjourned the meeting at 6:33 p.m.

A TRUE RECORD ATTEST

Gordon Vincent
Clerk of Committees